

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8198

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 13134

FOLG RECD ACTION DELHI INFO BOMBAY MADRAS RPTD FOR  
YOUR INFO. QUOTE.

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 2201

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: REMOVAL OF CHIEF MINISTER RAY

1. SENIOR WEST BENGAL CONGRESS PARTY SOURCE WHO WAS IN  
DELHI FOR CONSULTATIONS LAST WEEK AND RETURNED THERE  
YESTERDAY SAYS MRS. GANDHI HAS TOLD S.S. RAY THAT HE  
MUST STEP DOWN AND HAS GIVEN HIM CHOICE BETWEEN DOING  
IT NOW OR WITH DELAY OF A FEW WEEKS.

2. WHILE THIS IS THE ONLY FIRST HAND (OR POSSIBLY  
SECOND HAND) REPORT WE HAVE, EVERYTHING WE HEAR FROM A  
VARIETY OF SOURCES--JOURNALISTS, BUSINESS AND POLITICAL--  
POINTS IN THE SAME DIRECTION, AS DOES THE CONTINUING  
FRANTIC SHUTTLE OF WEST BENGAL POLITICAL LEADERS BE-  
TWEEN CALCUTTA AND DELHI. STORY THAT IS CIRCULATING IS  
THAT SANJAY GANDHI CAST THE FIRST STONE IN THE CAMPAIGN  
AGAINST RAY THAT BEGAN SOME WEEKS BACK. IT APPEARS THAT  
SANJAY'S DISPLEASURE WITH RAY EMBOLDENED RAY'S CRITICS  
AND GAVE SMELL OF BLOOD TO ALL THOSE WHO HAD A GRUDGE  
OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER AGAINST HIM. APPARENTLY THEIR  
NUMBER IS SUBSTANTIAL. RAY HAS BEEN AN EFFECTIVE CHIEF  
MINISTER BUT HE HAS NEVER BEEN MUCH LOVED HERE. HE HAS  
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BEEN RESPECTED AMR FEARED, HAS SEEMED COLD AND RUTH-

LESS, AND HAS IN THE COURSE OF FIVE YEARS IN OFFICE MADE MANY ENEMIES. NOW THAT HE HAS APPARENTLY FALLEN FROM FAVOR WITH DELHI WE ARE TOLD THAT IT IS HARD TO FIND ANYONE IN THE WEST BENGAL CONGRESS WHO HAS A GOOD WORD TO SAY FOR HIM. STATESMAN SEPTEMBER 7 QUOTES WEST BENGAL CONGRESS PRESIDENT ARUN MOITRA AS COMPLAINING THAT UNDER RAY THE GOWB FAILED TO INVOLVE THE PARTY AND MASSES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 20 POINT PROGRAM AND HAD RELIED MAINLY ON THE BUREAUCRACY.

3. EVERYONE SEEMS TO HAVE HIS OWN CANDIDATE TO REPLACE RAY. GOWB COMMERCE MINISTER TARUN KANTI GHOSH IS SAID TO BE BACKING ABDUS SATTAR, GOWB MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND A MOSELM, BUT CURRENT RUMOR GIVES UNION MINISTER OF COMMERCE CHATTOPADHAYA THE INSIDE TRACK, FOLLOWED BY UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR BANKING PRANAB MUKHERJEE. CPI DAILY KALANTAR SEPTEMBER 7 HINTS THAT THERE MIGHT BE A PERIOD OF PRESIDENT'S RULE IN THE INTERIM BETWEEN CHIEF MINISTERS. PRESUMABLY RAY'S MAIN HOPE FOR SAVING HIS POSITION WOULD LIE IN CONVINCING MRS. GANDHI THAT NONE OF THESE MEN OR ANY OTHER AVAILABLE CANDIDATE COULD KEEP THINGS TOGETHER IN WEST BENGAL.

4. THERE IS ALSO A RUMOR GOING AROUND CALCUTTA THAT MRS. SATPATHY IS TO BE REMOVED FROM CHIEF MINISTERSHIP OF ORISSA AND REPLACED BY JP PATNAIK, CURRENTLY UNION DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IF ANY CREDENCE SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THIS STORY. PRESUMABLY IT IS AN OUTGROWT OF AN EARLIER RUMOR, REPORTED CALCUTTA 2168, THAT SANJAY WANTED MRS. SATPATHY OUT. KORN UNQUOTE. SAXBE

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